

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The claims are 46, 47 and 49 to 71.

The above amendment incorporates the features of claim 48 into independent claims 46, 59, 64 and 70.

The significance of this amendment will be discussed below.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication that claims 55 to 57, 60 and 61 are allowed.

Claims 46, 47, 49, 50, 64-66 and 70 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Aoi et al. (U.S. 7,138,217).

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 48 has not been rejected and since the feature of claim 48 has been incorporated in the rejected independent claims and claims dependent thereon, it is apparent that the rejection is inapplicable to the present claims.

Claims 46-48, 52-54, 58 and 62-71 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by WO 03/055840). The WO document (in Japanese) is used in the rejection for the date, however, the English equivalent (EP 1460057) is used in the rejection for the content.

This rejection is also respectfully traversed.

The cited WO reference was published on July 10, 2003 which is after the priority date of Applicants' Japanese priority application filed November 9, 2002.

An English translation of said Japanese priority application with Translator's Statement is enclosed.

The Japanese application supports the present claims in all essential respects.


For the foregoing reasons, it is apparent that the rejections on prior art are untenable and should be withdrawn.

No further issues remaining, allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any comments or proposals for expediting prosecution, please contact undersigned at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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